

B-2091

Bowen & King Building  
405 North Charles Street  
Private

1915

Summary

The Bowen & King Building is significant in local architectural history for its finely detailed Classical Revival facade. This, like several other facades on North Charles Street, was part of the architectural response to the 1904 Fire, which resulted in the change from 19th century styles to the then-current historically-based Classical Revival styles.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Bowen &amp; King Optometrists Building

and/or common

## 2. Location

street &amp; number 405 North Charles Street

☐ not for publication

city, town Baltimore

☐ vicinity of

congressional district 3rd

state Maryland

county

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Bowen &amp; King

street &amp; number 405 North Charles Street

telephone no.: 685-0723

city, town Baltimore

state and zip code Maryland 21201

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse liber SCL 3179

street &amp; number Fayette &amp; Calvert Streets folio 47

city, town Baltimore

state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Baltimore Neighborhood Survey

date 1976

☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☒ local

depository for survey records Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation

city, town Baltimore

state Maryland 21201

## 7. Description

Survey No.

B-2091

**Condition**

☒ excellent  
☐ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

**Check one**

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

**Check one**

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Summary

The Bowen & King Optometrists Building is a four-story commercial building built about 1830 with an elaborate Classical Revival facade which was added in 1915. The building is located on the east side of North Charles Street just north of Mulberry Street in central Baltimore, Maryland. The owners and principal occupants are the same firm which had the facade built.

General Description

The first floor storefront is largely as built in 1915. The entrance is on the north side of a large display window with a heavy entablature separating the window and entry from the transom. Originally the window had dark painted wood muntins. These were altered in the late 1970's with arched frames and repainted white. The entry is recessed and gives access to the upper floor offices as well as to the optometrists store. The entire first story is framed with white marble in which the names "Bowen & King" are inscribed over the transom.

The upper floors of the facade are set off from the store front by a fret molding. The second and third stories are dominated by a two-story central arch framing an arched window with metal muntins and mullions. On the floor division between the second and third stories is an entablature with scroll consoles and a pediment. The wide sill of the central bay has a rosette ornamentation. The second floor window is marred by a air conditioner unit. Flanking the central window are two arched narrow windows with oriel sills and deeply recessed casements. The spandrels above the arch are ornamented with carved foliage. The fourth floor has oval windows with garlands and lions' heads flanking the arch.

The fourth floor is set off by a dentil molding above which are three windows grouped in the center bay between slightly projecting panels with carved floral ornamentation. The windows are 6/6 and, like the other windows on the upper stories, are deeply recessed. An air conditioning unit projects from the center window. An elaborate modillion cornice and a parapet with a blind balustrade complete the facade.

The interior of the main showroom retains much of its original fixtures and finishes dating from the 1915 remodeling. The floor is mosaic tile with borders. The walls have corinthian pilasters and two polished slate mantels on the north wall. These fireplaces are probably original to the early 19th century structure. An intervening wall between the common double pile plan was removed in 1915. Across the rear of the showroom is a wood screen with an entablature and broken pediment with urn along the top rail. A clock inscribed with the firm name also rests on the screen. The ceiling has modern acoustical tile between beams

(continue, please)

## 8. Significance

Survey No. B-2091

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1915 Builder/Architect Theodore W. Pietsch, architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D  
and/orApplicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ GLevel of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

### Summary

The Bowen & King Building is significant in local architectural history for its finely detailed Classical Revival facade. This, like several other facades on North Charles Street, was part of the architectural response to the 1904 Fire, which resulted in the change from 19th century styles to the then-current historically-based Classical Revival styles.

### History and Support

The earliest deed reference for the lot at 405 North Charles Street is dated 1831 and refers to a three-story brick building on the site. It is probable that the structure was built about 1830. During the late 19th century, a fourth story and mansard roof were added to the building. The tiles and dormer were probably added in the early 20th century. From 1835 to 1840, the building was the home of Gustav W. Lurman, of the firm of Oelrichs and Lurman. Late in the 19th century, the house was purchased by Ignatius Barton, whose wife Lottie ran a dressmaking business with her daughter, Tina B. Craig, from 1895 to 1907. From 1909 to 1914, the first floor was leased as part of the Hurlbutt & Hurlbutt interior decorating company with its principal address at 403 North Charles (See B-2090). In January 1915, the firm of Bowen and King purchased the property from Thomas O'Neill and hired Theodore Wells Pietsch to design a new facade and extensive alterations. Burns and Russell contractors were awarded the job in May and by August 1915, Bowen & King were open for business in their new building.

Harry B. Bowen (1877-1966) was born in Medina, New York. He came to Baltimore about 1897 and worked at first with G.T. Sadtler and Sons Optometrists at their 13 East Baltimore Street offices. On February 1, 1900, Bowen opened an office in partnership with his brother-in-law Aubrey E. King (1874-1951) at 119 North Liberty Street. The firm moved from that location to 405 North Charles in 1915 and has remained there to the present.





Bowen & King Optometrists,  
General Description, cont'd.  
Page 2

placed in the 1915 remodeling.

The Bowen & King firm has a photograph of the facade prior to 1915 when the interior decorating firm of Hurlbutt & Hurlbutt occupied 403 and 405 North Charles (1909-1914). The brick facade is 3 stories with a tiled mansard and a dormer with paired windows. The first floor has a round-arched display window with an awning. The doorway of 405 is not quite visible in the photograph and may actually have been much smaller than the present entry, since the Hurlbutt Store was entered through the doorway at 403. Entrance to 405 would only have been necessary for the upper floors. Windows in 405 were 1/1.

## BALTIMORE METROCENTER SURVEY

SURVEY NO.: B-2091

AREA: Cathedral Hill

MAGI NO.: 0420915611

Address: 405 North Charles Street

Current Name: Bowen &amp; King

Block: 566 Lot: 3

Lot size: 26 ft. x 126 ft.

Height: 4

Materials: Marble

Condition: Excellent

Owner: Bowen &amp; King

Use: Commercial

Accessible: yes, unrestricted

Designation:

Liber/Folio: SCL 3179/47



Historic Name: Bowen &amp; King

Date: 1915

Architect/Builder: Theodore W. Pietsch, arch.

Style (if appropriate): Classical Revival

## Description:

The 4-story marble facade was added to an early 19th century building along with extensive interior alterations in 1915. The first floor storefront has an off-center recessed entry and a display window with modern decorative muntins. A fret molding separates the first and second floors. A two-story central arch frames a fan-lighted window with metal muntins and mullions. An entablature and pediment are located above the second floor of the window. Flanking the arch on the second story are narrow arched casement windows with oriel sills. The third story has floral ornamentation on the spandrels of the arch and oval windows decorated with garlands and lion's heads. The fourth floor is separated from the third by a dentil molding. Three 6/6 windows are grouped in the center bay and flanked by carved floral panels. A parapet with blind balustrade above a modillion cornice completes the facade.

## Significance:

Area: Architecture

Level: Local

The Bowen & King Building is significant in local architectural history for its finely detailed Classical Revival facade. This, like several other facades on North Charles Street, was part of the architectural response to the 1904 Fire, which resulted in the change from 19th century styles to the then-current historically-based Classical Revival styles.

See Maryland Historical Trust Inventory form.

DR 4-24-15, 5-1-15. BS 1-15-15, 4-23-15, 4-29-15, 4-30-15.

Sources: EP Md. Dept., Biography card file.

Surveyor and Date: Janet L. Davis, Jan. 1985

Baltimore Metrocenter Survey  
Cathedral Hill Area  
Bowen & King  
405 North Charles Street  
B-2091





Bowen & King Optometrists B-2091  
405 North Charles Street  
Cathedral Hill - Metrocenter Survey  
Baltimore (City), Maryland  
Photo: Janet Davis  
Date: August 1984  
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust  
West elevation

## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

B-2091  
MAG#0420915611

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

405 N. Charles Street

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

405 N. Charles Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Borven &amp; King, Inc.

Telephone #:

STREET &amp; NUMBER

405 N. Charles Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

VICINITY OF

Maryland 21202

STATE, zip code

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Records Office Room 601

Liber #: SCL 3179-  
Folio #: 47

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Baltimore City Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland 21202

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

City of Baltimore Neighborhood Survey

DATE

1975

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☒ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Commission for Hist. &amp; Arch. Pres.

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland

## 7 DESCRIPTION

B-2091

### CONDITION

—EXCELLENT  
☒ GOOD  
—FAIR

—DETERIORATED  
—RUINS  
—UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

—UNALTERED  
☒ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
—MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This is a four story high, three bay wide structure. It is faced with ashlar, and is generally similar to 407 N. Charles Street, but its second and third story window arrangements are different.

The whole center bay of the building is recessed beginning at the second story. In the second and third stories, the center bay is consumed in a large stilled, round-arched recess, which is keystone at the top.

Within the bay, on the second story, French windows are flanking by single hung windows, one on each side. All windows have eight lights and bipartite transoms.<sup>1</sup> Moulded mullions are located between the French windows and their flanks, Brackets mounted on the mullions support a blank entablature and pediment. Directly above are the third story windows, which are arranged in a fanlight of three lights. Foliate decorations occupy the spandrels between the top of the round arch and the flat arch which contains it. Above the spandrels is a dentiled bell course which extends the width of the facade between the third and fourth story windows.

In both of the outer bays of the second story is a single hung window of twelve lights set in a narrow, stilted round arch with a projecting, semicircular sill. The slightly recessed rectangular stops short of the outer bays of the third story. In these outer bays are avoid oculus windows of four lights. Their frames are moulded, and garlands suspended from lions' heads surround the upper portion of the windows.

Acanthus decorated panels flank the fourth story windows, which are more closely grouped than those of 407 N. Charles.

<sup>1</sup>This sill for these windows rest on a projecting base decorated with roundels.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

B-2091

## PERIOD

☐ PREHISTORIC  
☐ 1400-1499  
☐ 1500-1599  
☐ 1600-1699  
☐ 1700-1799  
☐ 1800-1899  
☒ 1900-

☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC  
☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC  
☐ AGRICULTURE  
☒ ARCHITECTURE  
☐ ART  
☐ COMMERCE  
☐ COMMUNICATIONS

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING  
☐ CONSERVATION  
☐ ECONOMICS  
☐ EDUCATION  
☐ ENGINEERING  
☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT  
☐ INDUSTRY  
☐ INVENTION

☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
☐ LAW  
☐ LITERATURE  
☐ MILITARY  
☐ MUSIC  
☐ PHILOSOPHY  
☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

☐ RELIGION  
☐ SCIENCE  
☐ SCULPTURE  
☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN  
☐ THEATER  
☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)

## SPECIFIC DATES

## BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

see 403 N. CHARLES FOR PHOTOGRAPH  
" 421 " " " SIGNIF.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY



**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Joe Potts

ORGANIZATION

Commission for Hist. &amp; Arch. Pres.

DATE

STREET &amp; NUMBER

26 S. Calvert Street Room 900

TELEPHONE

396-4866

CITY OR TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland 21202

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

REVISIONS  
 Lots 15, 16, 17 Cons'd P, App 0836 C Sh 3437  
 Lot 16 Direct Per City Sec Lot, C Sh 4429  
 Lot 30311 STREET NAME CORR PER L&R 8651B

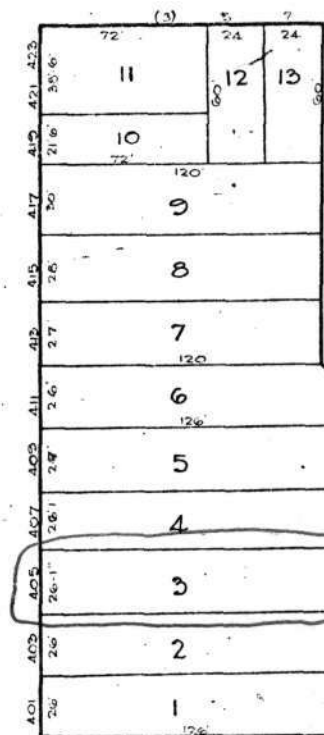
B-2091

E. FRANKLIN

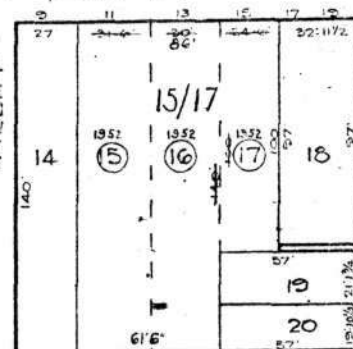
ST.

ST.

N. CHARLES



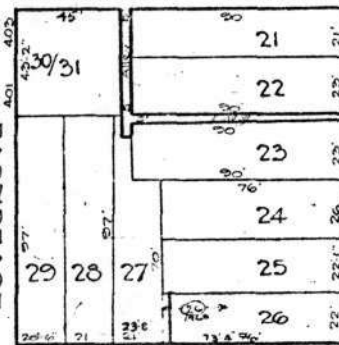
STREET ALLEY



PLACE

SCRABBLE ALLEY

LOVEGROVE



ST. PAUL

E. MULBERRY

ST.

TRACED BY MOORHEAD  
 LETTERED BY W.M.L.R.  
 CHECKED BY W.M.L.R.

TO THE PUBLIC  
 BY THE CITY OF BALTIMORE  
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
 BUREAU OF PLANS & SURVEYS  
 PROPERTY LOCATION DIVISION

CITY OF BALTIMORE  
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
 BUREAU OF PLANS & SURVEYS  
 PROPERTY LOCATION DIVISION  
 WARD 4 SECTION 1  
 BLOCK 500  
 SCALE: 1" = 50' (SEE MAP FOR DETAILS)

B-2091  
Bowen & King Building  
405 North Charles Street  
Block 0566 Lot 003  
Baltimore City  
Baltimore East Quad

